

DECONSTRUCTING THE PATRIARCH:  
EDUARDO MARQUINA'S *LAS HIJAS DEL CID* (1908)

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One of the least discussed casualties of Spain's Civil War was the joint ownership of the nation's past by the country's intellectuals, writers and politicians, whether liberal or conservative. Until 1936, tradition was the patrimony of both the Right and the Left. A liberal poet like Antonio Machado felt free to note that his *Campos de Castilla* arose in part from «una preocupación patriótica» (Machado 1594), just as Cristóbal de Castro, a conservative intellectual, could criticize the Republic's cultural policy in the name of «el decoro nacional» (Castro 14). In the early years of the twentieth century, patriotism, pride in the nation's cultural icons and a determination to reconstruct Spain were shared by Socialists, Falangists, Republicans and Monarchists alike (Mainer 14-20). After the war, however, the nation's tradition became almost the sole province of the victors. The Franco regime shrewdly appropriated the symbols and genres of the nation's past and rewrote history to suit its purposes. As David Herzberger has written, «the way in which the Regime [...] positioned itself within historical time grew from a desire to make the past the exclusive property of the State» (1995: ix)<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, vast areas of tradition became synonymous with political authoritarianism and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> «For the Franco regime, this means that the State used the past both to underpin its existence as the fulfillment of Spain's historical destiny and to give moral legitimacy to its claim of authority in the present» (16).

essentialism, leaving many liberals and moderates without a useable past. As noted by Juan María Sánchez-Prieto: «No había nada que buscar fuera del tradicionalismo católico y antiliberal: hacía frío fuera del Estado confesional» (Sánchez-Prieto 20).

The war thus became a kind of distorting lens for historians looking through it into the early years of the twentieth century. In Herzberger's words, a line was drawn «entre la nación auténtica y la "otra" nación no auténtica» (1999: 105). This demarcation gave us a simplified misrepresentation of many liberal figures from the early years of the twentieth century: the motives behind Lorca's assassination being cast as sexual rather than political is but one example. But the partisan gaze provoked distorted depictions of traditionalists, too, by liberal intellectuals intent on combating the dictatorship. José Monleón's portrait of Benavente comes to mind. By reducing his work to «un eco de la burguesía española», a class designation that in the political code of the opposition stood for *franquista*, Monleón dismissed the achievement of a playwright who satirized the very bourgeoisie that made his commercial success possible (Monleón 165).

Historiographic manipulation was thus common to both the victors and those who resisted them. The divisions opened by the civil war were often displaced in the post-war period to the cultural realm where historians and critics continued the fight. The pen sometimes *was* mightier than the sword<sup>2</sup>. Historians of Spanish theater could not easily escape the effects of partisan historiography. After 1939 the rich complexity of Spain's theatrical history in the early twentieth century was often replaced by «binary thinking» (Boyd 86). Both Right and Left established categories of «authentic» and «inauthentic» playwrights. Among the playwrights from the early years of the century, Valle-Inclán and Lorca became emblems of resistance, whereas the Álvarez Quintero brothers and Pedro Muñoz Seca were championed—and staged—as politically correct dramatists. Caught in this crossfire was the playwright Eduardo Marquina, the subject of this essay.

Marquina was a Catalan who chose to write in Castilian, first as a lyric and civic poet and then as a dramatist. He was credited

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Óscar Barrero: «Posiblemente en ninguna nación occidental se haya extremado tanto como en la España de los últimos sesenta años esa ideologización de la literatura, si teñida de azul en los primeros lustros, bañada en rojo en los siguientes» (63).

with reintroducing history to the Spanish stage in the years following the Disaster of 1898, precisely when the nation's history became a «problem» that could no longer be avoided. During the 1930s Marquina witnessed the tensions that finally tore Spain apart, and when he returned from exile in 1938, he, like many others, made his peace with the eventual victors in the war. It was through that gesture that almost all post-war historians of the theater have viewed his entire work.

For years after his death, Marquina was tagged as a reactionary playwright who glorified Spain's imperial past in response to the loss of national pride in 1898. Beatriz Herranz Angulo is correct when she states that «Considerado autor de derechas, conservador, cristiano confeso, Marquina ha sido simplificado en exceso en casi todos los estudios de los últimos veinte años» (19). Even his early plays were read as trumpeting values that eventually fueled the Franco regime's «crusade» to restore the nation's imperial tradition. In Ruiz Ramón's highly respected history, this is what we read:

A través del entusiasmo poético y de la creencia en unos valores supremos de raza, el pasado español, encarnado en unas figuras históricas de excepción, impone sobre la escena su esplendor y su magia, a la vez que propone una lección de grandeza que exalte el espíritu patriótico y lo reconcilie consigo mismo. Se trata, naturalmente, de un teatro mínimamente problemático, por mínimamente crítico, pues no se invita en él a meditar en la historia ni en su sentido, sino a comulgar con unos ideales en los que se fija la esencia de lo español y de su trayectoria histórica. El sentido fundamental de este teatro brillante y superficial es [...] la de un rescate y una redención: el de la tradición<sup>3</sup>. (65)

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<sup>3</sup> Bereguer argues that the *modernista* verse of plays like *Las hijas del Cid* gave them an air of revolutionary poetic structure, «un marchamo falso de radicalización» that obscured their «tendencia restauradora de la visión del mundo de la nobleza» (208). Valbuena Prat wrote that «en los comienzos se dio en él el falso historicismo» (400) while Rubio Jiménez maintains that Marquina «asumió acriticamente y con un confusionismo extraordinario» the tradition of Golden Age theater: «el suyo era ya [1908] un verdadero programa de teatro poético nacionalista, la evocación de una supuesta España eterna» (50-51). In his survey, De la Nuez states that «Starting in 1908 Marquina adopted a traditionalist, conservative point of view and identified with the “establishment” in Spain» (38). G.G. Brown judges Marquina's historical dramas as «imitations of Romantic imitations of Golden Age historical plays» and finds in *Las hijas del Cid* an attempt «to stir the souls of his compatriots with an evocation of their long-vanished national hero» (117-118). Gwynne

The young Marquina was indeed preoccupied with Spain's tradition, as were most of the country's intellectuals at the time. Like Costa, Unamuno, Altamira and Ganivet, the Catalan playwright embarked on a nationalist project and found in the theater an ideal arena for it. But when read today, his early plays seem hardly uncritical of tradition. Instead, the historical dramas he began to premiere in 1908 strike one as initiating a deconstruction of some of Spain's most sacred national myths: the reconquest, understood as the enterprise through which the nation asserted its identity; medieval Castile, viewed as the «aglutinante de la empresa nacional» (Mainer 16); and the Empire, configured as an epic undertaking. All of these presumed truths met with revisionist challenges in his early dramas: *Las hijas del Cid* (1908), *Doña María, la Brava* (1909) and *En Flandes se ha puesto el sol* (1910). The work I will discuss here, *Las hijas del Cid*, was a commercial failure—it saw only fifteen performances—in part, surely, because it challenged the status of the Cid as a foundational figure—a father—of Spain. A father he remained in Marquina's text but not of the nation. As the play's title indicates, Marquina focused not on El Campeador but on his daughters, who were beaten and raped, he suggests, thanks to the hubris of their ambitious father.

*Las hijas del Cid* was premiered in Madrid's Teatro Español on March 5, 1908 by the most prestigious company of the day, whose stars were María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza. The play was received with grave reservations by most critics who objected to Marquina's disrespectful treatment of the mythical Cid, an icon of national identity<sup>4</sup>. «Más de cuatro espectadores se sor-

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Edwards concurs with the general assessment: «De tono heroico, estas obras ejemplifican en sus personajes cualidades como el valor, la nobleza, la lealtad y el sacrificio, que son presentadas en escena como la esencia del glorioso pasado de España y como modelo para las generaciones presentes y futuras. Pero [...] su tono, excesivamente idealizado, imposibilita cualquier intento de presentar una visión crítica, por pequeña que sea, de ese pasado» (16). Excepcional in this critical context is the view of G. Torrente Ballester: «Eduardo Marquina tendió, como es sabido, a la idealización, pero no tanto que se atreviese a negar lo evidente. Era, en el fondo, un liberal, y su más famosa pieza histórica, *En Flandes se ha puesto el sol*, más que a la exaltación, tiende a la melancolía. No es, en ella, un triunfalista, ni se atreve tampoco a justificar lo injustificable» (387-388). For a discusión of *Flandes* as a continuation of Marquina's revisionist program, see my essay «Eduardo Marquina ante o imperio: Nova proposta de *En Flandes se ha puesto el sol* (1910)». *Revista Galega do Ensino*, 33 (Nov. 2001): 17-33.

<sup>4</sup> Menéndez Pelayo, in his *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos* (1903), stated that the *Poema del Cid* communicated an «ardiente sentido nacional, que sin estar ex-

prendieron al ver en escena la colosal figura de Rodrigo de Vivar, empeñada en un asunto puramente casero, en el que no puede aparecer en toda su grandeza la personalidad histórica o legendaria del héroe inmortalizado por nuestro romancero» (Arimón). Keenly disturbing was the fact that the hero of the national epic hardly appeared on stage. In this «dramatic legend in 5 acts,» the Cid is upstaged by his daughters, Elvira and Sol, who are the true subjects of the drama. «No hay que olvidar que el drama no trata de las hazañas del Cid, sino del episodio de sus hijas y los condes de Carrión. El Cid está presentado de soslayo» (Gómez de Baquero 161). And in the end, the role of epic hero is replaced by that of a father who weeps over the corpse of his favorite daughter. Marquina rewrote a principal episode of the *Poema de Mío Cid* by inverting the hierarchy of genders and refashioning a national epic into a family drama.

The novelty of *Las hijas del Cid* was Marquina's decision to place the Cid's daughters at the center of the action and to suggest how they might have viewed their betrothal to the cruel Infantes de Carrión<sup>5</sup>. Their perspective clashed with traditional expectations for women, to say the least. Rather than obediently accepting the marriage, both daughters question it. At stake is the authority of the patriarch, invoked here in his age-old privilege of deciding whom his daughters will wed. The Cid's wife, Jimena, accepts this authority, as can be seen in the advice she gives her daughters in the play's opening scene:

Alma y sentidos y vida y potencias  
él os ha dado, él os guarda; de él sean.  
Manos de padre, entregaos a ellas  
y no os perdáis por los negros caminos. (514)

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preso en ninguna parte, vivifica el conjunto con tal energía, que la figura del héroe [...] es para nosotros símbolo de la nacionalidad, y fuera de España se confunde con el nombre mismo de nuestra patria» (quoted by Luis Galván and Enrique Banús 121). Cf. José de Laserna, writing in *El Imparcial*: «Lejos de echar doble llave al sepulcro del Cid, [Marquina] remueve nuevamente los huesos del héroe de las áridas mesetas castellanas, donde se forjó el espíritu de nuestra más grande y más gloriosa epopeya nacional».

<sup>5</sup> According to *Alejandro Miquis*, «el haber sacado al Cid y a su drama de los carriles en que le colocó Guillén de Castro» was the most interesting aspect of this «drama histórico a la moderna».

Their life and very souls are owed to their father, and they should thus «surrender» both to him. These verses are ultimately ironic, for Elvira and Sol end by getting lost on the «dark roads» of history precisely because they place their happiness in their father's hands. The Cid, owing fealty to his king, Alfonso, agrees to marry his daughters to the wicked Infantes as proposed by the Monarch. But Marquina makes plain that the Cid is primarily motivated by ambition and pride in making the match. He wishes to «perpetuar privilegio» in his family: «Sangre del Cid y sangre de reyes / se han de juntar» he states in Act V (616). When the Infantes rape the Cid's daughters and leave them for dead in the Robledal de Corps, it is evident that the Cid's aspirations must bear part of the blame. It is also clear, when reading for cultural and historical meaning, that the patriarch is shown to be incapable of fulfilling his obligation to protect his women folk. Marquina's implicit challenge thus emerges: if the father can not shelter his own daughters from violation, how could he father an entire nation?

In the epic *Poema de Mío Cid* this error was readily corrected. After the brutal affront, a Judgment of God is convened and the Cid's knights defeat the infamous Infantes, prelude to the King's betrothing the wronged women a second time, to the kings of Navarre and Aragon. The Cid's desire to «perpetuate privilege» in his house is thus realized, and his authority, momentarily damaged, is repaired and even strengthened in the hierarchy of nobility. In Marquina's play, by contrast, the Cid's error has fatal consequences. Sol bends to her father's will, but Elvira, in an extraordinary modification of the epic, leaves her father, renounces her condition of being a woman («Esta que veis, castellanos con honra, / ya no es mujer, rica hembra ni hembra» [598]), dons the armor of a man and on the field of battle avenges the affront she has suffered by killing the man who raped her<sup>6</sup>. She is wounded in the battle, however, and in the last scene of the play dies in her mother's arms while her father is reduced to tears and self-recrimination.

With this «correction» of a major episode in the *Poema de Mío Cid*, Marquina suggests that Spain's origins, if attributed to the Cid, lay in a tragic error provoked by a fatal flaw in the patri-

<sup>6</sup> A similar case appears in Vélez de Guevara's *La serrana de la Vera*, which Margarita Xirgu revived years later (Teatro Español, 20-II-1932).

arch<sup>7</sup>. As Elvira lies dying, the Cid accuses himself of having sold her life to satisfy his own ambition (the Kings of Navarre and Aragon have just arrived to wed the Cid's daughters and are crossing the threshold):

¡Reyes, destino fatal de mi casa!  
 ¡Atrás, atrás, o volvedme a mi hija!  
 ¡No, no me escuchan..., avanzan! Los siento  
 entrar aquí..., ¡y me hielan la sangre!  
 Llega la muerte, la reina de todos.  
 Vendí la vida al fatal privilegio.... (624)

One thinks immediately of the laments, in Spanish balladry, of the last Gothic King, Rodrigo, whose lust for La Cava, the daughter of don Julián, opened Spain to the Muslim conquest. The foundational legend involving La Cava has, at its core, two features that structure Marquina's drama: the failure of a patriarch and a daughter who is sexually violated. By moving the Cid into Rodrigo's shadow—and by casting the epic hero as a flawed father—Marquina challenged the heroic and masculine version of Spain's founding.

The reviews of Marquina's play leave no doubt that this version of the Cid met with considerable resistance. Marquina was reproached by the critics for withholding from the stage *their* Cid, the heroic Cid. «Quisiera el espectador que el Cid resucitado por Marquina, no fuese el viejo Cid, el hombre abrumado por las penas y los lustros» (Francos Rodríguez 28). Writing in *El Imparcial*, José de la Serna came close to accusing Marquina of historical betrayal:

El Cid, como la fe, nos convence en sus obras. Es un hombre de acción [...]. Queremos verle y admirarle en plena actividad y ejecución, en sus conquistas, amores y combates, retando, luchando y triunfando. [...] «Mío Cid», nuestro Cid es ese. El Cid de esta leyenda dramática es otro. Es el Cid

<sup>7</sup> Cf. José Alsina, «¿Ha querido hacer una tragedia? ¿Ha pretendido dar un aldobonazo sonoro en el templo callado del romanticismo? Seguramente ha deseado ambas cosas, esto es: escribir una tragedia de moldes clásicos, reflejo de una época [...]; and *Floridor*: «Marquina ha tomado pie de la leyenda para componer una narración trágica en cinco actos».

melancólico, sentimental, agrio y brusco a ratos, «oratorio», en perpetua lamentación de su desdicha doméstica, como un rey Lear atribulado y quejumbroso<sup>8</sup>.

Eduardo Gómez de Baquero saw the same discrepancy between the Cid of tradition and Marquina's recreation: «El tipo del Cid ha parecido a algunos demasiado blando [...], un excelente padre de familia sin suficiente irritabilidad y violencia para un héroe» (160-161)<sup>9</sup>. Menéndez Pidal, the scholar who perhaps knew most about the historical and literary Cid, recognized that Marquina was distancing himself from a blind exaltation of the past: «Con diversa intención artística, el joven poeta catalán Marquina, siguiendo la tendencia de Costa, remueve los huesos del Cid; no para exaltación aparatosa y ciega del pasado, sino para dar lugar a un duro análisis psicológico-histórico». Yet that very distance from the historical record disturbed this historian:

Un mérito de Marquina consiste en haber sido el primer dramático que se inspira directamente en el primitivo poema del Cid. [...] Marquina dramatiza a menudo el poema con verdadero talento, con gran vigor artístico; pero [...] el poeta huye del héroe, como si no resistiese su mirada. Sólo en la escena final, y como algo postizo y posterior al drama, viene a concretar una concepción psicológica del personaje, esquivada hasta el último momento. Nos le presenta como un héroe que, después de haber forjado el destino a su gusto, al ver su brazo ya sin fuerzas, se deja poseer de la manía de casar sus hijas con reyes; y cuando lo logra, pierde el seso, gesticulando ante su hija en descompuestas reverencias [...]. Este Cid está demasiado lejos de la ecuanimidad del Cid de la epopeya, que nunca deseó matrimonios reales, y sólo los acepta impuestos por su soberano. (Menéndez Pidal)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. ZEDA: «los personajes de *Las hijas del Cid* han sido modernizados por Marquina: sus ideas y sus sentimientos más son de nuestro tiempo que del siglo xi. Ciertamente que el Cid, en el drama se ata las barbas como en el poema, [...] pero su fisonomía espiritual más se parece a un anciano de nuestros días que a aquel fiero caudillo». This critic especially objected to the masculine role given to Doña Elvira: «Elvira, rompiendo lanzas en los torneos, desvirtúa la figura de la hija mayor del Cid. Ningún motivo histórico ni legendario hay para creer que la ultrajada joven fuese un tirano capaz de combatir como los caballeros del poema».

<sup>9</sup> Benavente was more ironic. In his column «De sobremesa» for *El Imparcial* he imagined the following conversation with a patroness of the opera:

«—¿Y “Las hijas del Cid”? —pregunto a otra abonada.

—¿Qué quiere usted que le diga? ¡El Cid llora tanto!

—Quizás no sea toda la culpa del Cid ni del autor. Es una obra que demuestra que la yernocracia es un mal antiguo. Pero tiene usted razón; el Cid llora mucho».



Marquina's rewriting of Spain's foundational epic offered a «psychological-historical» version of the story from the coordinates of 1908<sup>10</sup>. The Cid's heroic deeds, known to all who attended the première, were eclipsed by his intimate response to the discovery of the truth about himself. One could argue that this characterization was dramatically archaic at the time, for it placed Marquina's work squarely in the tradition of nineteenth-century psychological drama. But another possibility seems more fitting, namely that the playwright made use of that well-known dramatic discourse to disturb one of Spain's foundational narratives. The very inappropriateness of bending epic through the lens of psychological theater called attention to his decentering project. By focusing on the Cid's daughters, Marquina demasculinized the foundational myth while shifting it from an heroic to a tragic story. As Jordá noted in *España Nueva*, the forest episode in the epic «le sirve al autor [...] para presentar en toda su complejidad el carácter del Cid, complicando la leyenda y mostrándonos con toda su glorificación toda la tragedia de su vida y la significación de su obra» (my emphasis).

Two years later Marquina would write that «La poesía no es la materia, sino "un modo" de la materia» (1910b: 3). His new «mode» of presenting the nation's history on stage suggested that Spain's beginnings lay not in a «gloriosa epopeya nacional» but in the tragic gesture of masculine hubris<sup>11</sup>. The Catalan poet cast

<sup>10</sup> Another, political, reading from the period—that Marquina was presenting a Catalan challenge to the Castilian origins of the nation—is filtered through *Alejandro Miquis's* review. This critic takes pains to deny the possible allegation: «Un poeta catalán a quien tienen los catalanistas por su poeta, Eduardo Marquina, ha cantado en el escenario del teatro Español, un florido himno a Castilla: [...] nos ha mostrado la bravura y la nobleza castellana, no ya en el Cid, sino en su hija D<sup>a</sup> Elvira; y si ella muere al final de la tragedia, su muerte no puede tomarse como un símbolo ofensivo para los castellanos: del noble linaje queda en pie la dulce D<sup>a</sup> Sol, toda bondad, sentimiento y nobleza, y esas serían, aun faltando el valor temerario y victorioso, cualidades bastantes para hacer a una raza fuerte y soberana. Hay, pues, que creer, que el poeta catalán ha cantado a Castilla, sin nefanda intención». Cf. Francos Rodríguez: «Así Marquina, estrenando *Las hijas del Cid*, ha cumplido en cierto modo con un alto deber patriótico, contribuyendo a que se borren antagonismos injustificados; inspirándose en los héroes castellanos demuestra con hechos que la historia de España es una, aunque la escribieran pueblos diferentes» (22-23).

<sup>11</sup> This vision is already implicit in the final scene of Part I of *Don Juan Tenorio* in which the Comendador and Don Luis refuse to let Don Juan abide by the laws of love and insist that he observe their male code of honor.

aside the *Cid* of tradition (and of history) in accordance with a modern historiographic vision that he described as follows:

La pretendida verdad histórica es tan relativa y accidental y cambiante y dudosa como la pretendida verdad naturalista de ciertas obras que se precian de reproducir la vida moderna exactamente, cuando lo que hacen es detenerla para marcar, sobre un fondo, su silueta de un momento. (1910a: 3)

This vision of historical truth as relative, changing and open to debate clashes altogether with the historical essentialism attributed to Marquina by most historians of Spain's theater. Needless to say, it also clashed with the expectations of a large segment of the audience, those who were unprepared for, or unwilling to accept, a relativistic notion of the nation's origins.

The reviews of the première tell two different but related tales. The first I have just sketched: disappointment, even anger, at the loss of the national hero, replaced on stage by a *Cid* who seemed «demasiado blando», «en perpetua lamentación de su desdicha doméstica», «abrumado por las penas y los lustros». This broken hero, along with the tragic consequences of his personal ambition, inspired the reservations noted above and was thus recognized and engaged by the critics («Este nuevo *Cid* no es un *Cid* popular» [Gómez de Baquero 162]). Indeed, more than one journalist justified this departure from tradition by reminding readers that Marquina was a poet, not a historian<sup>12</sup>. But the reviews also tell of a reluctance to accept Marquina's radical proposal that Spain's foundational story could be rewritten. The essentialism attributed to Marquina's early historical plays, so evident among post-Civil War critics, had its own beginnings early in the century, at a moment when the country was ripe for a resurgence of nationalist fervor.

A case in point is Francos Rodríguez's essay «La poesía en escena» in which we read the following:

*Las hijas del Cid* es un drama poético; un drama escrito por un gran artista, enamorado de los ideales, que busca en las

<sup>12</sup> «Como la leyenda se toma libertades con la historia, no tiene derecho a quejarse que sus adaptadores a nuevas formas literarias se las tomen con ella» (Gómez de Baquero); «El poeta no se ha preocupado de ser fiel a la Historia, y ha hecho bien, [...]. Si la verdad histórica aparece mutilada casi siempre, los fueros de la poesía salen ilesos de la obra» (Manuel Bueno).

leyendas patrias origen para sacudir el espíritu nacional, algo tomado por la inercia. La vieja Castilla con su épica lucha contra los moros; el Campeador en cuya figura se pintan todos los ímpetus de una raza, todas las heroicidades de una época, aparecen descritos por el dramaturgo con las pinceladas firmes, bellas, que atraen y sugestionan. ¡Así nació nuestra tierra! (26-27)

One wonders what play Francos Rodríguez saw, for Marquina's text highlights the *absence* of «los ímpetus de una raza», the *loss* of «las heroicidades de una época» and *questions* the traditional assumption behind the phrase «¡Así nació nuestra tierra!». Perhaps the critic simply missed the point, but he wasn't alone. Manuel Bueno wrote: «Se evoca en la obra la sombra de un pasado rudo y caballeresco, que, sea histórico o sea legendario, no puede menos de enorgullecer a nuestra raza». And José Alsina: «Ha sido como un resurgir de las muertas grandezas esta reaparición de Rodrigo de Vivar sobre la escena. Y acaso tenga menos importancia el nombre de Mío Cid, como expresión simbólica de las glorias conquistadoras de la raza, que como representación de épocas en las que el ideal bastaba para infundir en los corazones bríos y audacias». Alsina's mention of «el ideal» suggests a reason for the odd emphasis on the presence, rather than the absence, of the conquering glories of the race. He continues: «Ese aura de idealidad es lo que nos prometía anoche la evocación del invencible castellano, promesa tanto más grata cuanto que los actuales misérrimos tiempos han barrido con su positivismo letal, toda esperanza de heroísmo y de héroes». A similar allusion to a dearth of idealism is found in Jordá's review in *España Nueva*: «En estos tiempos de prosa y decaimiento espiritual, en que lo espiritual, en que todo lo grande, lo épico y lo heroico parece pueril y ridículo a los superhombres modernos, era empeño atrevido y audaz el del poeta al presentarnos su musa vestida con el clásico ropaje que parecía abandonado y al intentar hacerla brillar gallardamente con la resurrección de la leyenda». Evident in these comments is the yearning for new (or old) ideals that would fuel the nationalistic reconstruction of Spain. In that context, Marquina's too human Cid was unwelcome and easily obscured by the «*Cid Campeador*, que tal fue su empuje y su brazo, que más parece un ser sobrenatural, que hombre hecho a imagen y semejanza de los suyos» (*Floridor*). Not only was the failed patriarch rejected by

some sectors of the audience, he was replaced in their reviews by the legendary hero whom they expected to see on stage. They could not accept, in fine, Marquina's withholding from them the symbol of the nation's epic origins.

The reception of Marquina's *Las hijas del Cid* shows how sensitive Spanish audiences were to the question of how the nation's past should be represented. Pushed and pulled between critics who would appropriate his revisionist project to resurrect in 1908 a moribund imaginary, or to attack a backward-looking dictatorship after 1939, Marquina's early plays pose historiographic questions not easily countenanced by viewers and readers uneasy about their collective past. By bringing history onto the stage and disturbing inherited paradigms, the Catalan playwright initiated a critical practice whose continuation can be traced in Valle-Inclán's *Farsa y licencia de la Reina castiza*, Goytisolo's *La reivindicación del conde don Julián*, Ortiz's *Urraca* and Manuel de Prada's *Las máscaras del héroe*. Rather than place *Las hijas del Cid* in the «apasionada dualidad» evoked by Torrente Ballester —«las dos España enfrentadas en la realidad y en la opinión sobre el pasado» (387)— I would situate the play in that long line of modern works that attempt to incorporate into their art an awareness that history is, as Marquina wrote, «relativa y accidental y cambiante y dudosa».

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